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THE GRAD UNION CHRONICLE

Official Newsletter of
the United Graduate Workers of UMN



Welcome Back!

BY ASHLEY BERNARDO

After a long summer working together to prepare for the upcoming academic year, we are gearing up for a strong organizing push. Between hosting strategic retreats, information and study groups, social events, and many, many committee meetings, members of UGW worked hard to get the groundwork laid for a productive year of organizing for the contract we deserve and demand.

In an effort to increase communication with our bargaining unit, UGW’s Communications Committee will be producing a monthly newsletter to keep you all in the know with all things graduate labor on campus. This month, we will be beginning our information campaign on our Collective Bargaining Agreement and celebrating graduate workers on campus in our Graduate Worker Spotlight. (Know someone you’d like to nominate for the spotlight? [Click Here!](#))

Being a graduate student and a graduate worker is no easy feat; but that doesn’t mean that we have to struggle to eat, to take care of our health, or to keep a roof over our heads! UGW knows that all graduate workers deserve to be compensated appropriately for all the work we pour into the University. Join with your fellow graduate workers as we continue the fight for bettering our working conditions on campus!

Upcoming Events

Sept 2nd 10:00 am-2:00 pm
CNMLC Labor Day Picnic

Sept 3rd 5:00-7:00 PM -
Union Book Club

Sept 4th 5:30-6:30 PM -
Stewards/Committees Interest Meeting

August 26 through September 15th
- Nomination Period for Bargaining Committee Elections

September 16 through September 20th - Bargaining Committee Elections

September 26th 5:30-6:30 -
General Membership Meeting

[\(See more on our website!\)](#)

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AY 2024-2025 Bargaining Committee Elections

BY UGW ELECTIONS COMMITTEE



UGW UE Local 1466 is holding elections for our executive council and area stewards. Elections will take place the week of September 16th - 20th. Nominations are open now until Sunday, September 15th. If you want to self-nominate or nominate someone else, please fill out this [nomination form](#). Your responses will be emailed back to you once submitted. If you don't receive the responses, please resubmit the form.

To read about the duties of the elected positions, please see [UGW's CBA](#). You have to be a member to both run and vote in this election. If you are not a member yet, [sign a card here!](#)

For any questions and queries, please contact Katie Slack at kslack1@unm.edu.

Know Your Rights - Article V

BY GABRIEL GARCIA

Each issue, we'll highlight sections of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between UGW and UNM so that you know your rights. This week, we're taking a look at Article 5, which covers compensation.

As part of our CBA, the UGW has negotiated the wages paid to all graduate workers with an assistantship contract (GAs, PAs, RAs, TAs). Last year, UGW won a raise to the minimum stipends for all these grad workers, as well as a 4.5% raise for stipends already above the minimums. While this sets the minimum salary workers are guaranteed, departments can pay HIGHER than this amount.

Teaching Assistants (TA) and Graduate Assistants (GA)

Appointment Percentage (FTE)	Pre-Masters (Contract Total)	Post-Masters (Contract Total)
50%	\$9,160.77 / semester	\$10,077.56 / semester
25%	\$4,580.38 / semester	\$5,038.78 / semester

Research Assistants (RA)

Appointment Percentage (FTE)	Pre-Masters (Monthly Rate)	Post-Masters (Monthly Rate)
50%	\$2,086.07 / month	\$2,294.81 / month
25%	\$1,043.05 / month	\$1,147.40 / month

Project Assistants (PA)

Pre-Masters	Post-Masters
Minimum Hourly Pay Rate	Hourly Rate
\$23.14	\$25.45

[Click here for the Wage Calculator!](#)

Grievance Updates

BY NICHOLAS CHAVEZ

During the summer 2024 semester, United Graduate Workers worked on a number of grievances, or instances of a violation of our Collective Bargaining Agreement. Grievances are one of the important ways that we wield our power and enforce the contract that we hold with the University admin.

In this month's issue, we will be discussing two important grievances we worked on this summer.

In the first case, a worker faced unfair treatment from their supervisor, resulting in a challenging and hostile work environment. Despite resistance from the University at every attempt to hold the supervisor accountable for their actions, our union pushed the administration to maintain accountability and is taking measures to ensure that workers in our bargaining unit are treated fairly.

In another instance, a member was asked by their supervisor to work outside of their contract dates and performed work that was uncompensated. Our union represented this worker in their grievance, demanding that the University compensate them for the additional work. The university agreed to compensate the worker for the two extra weeks they worked beyond their contracted period, marking a victory for our local.

Think you may have seen a violation of our CBA? [Let us know here!](#)

Grad Worker Spotlight: Rae Stringfield

Each month, we'll be featuring a different member of our local in order to spread awareness and build solidarity around the work being done by the members of UGW local 1466. [Click here](#) to nominate a grad worker for a feature!



Piñon, Rae's 1 year old kitty

As a Teaching Assistant in the English Department, Rae Stringfield works as the teacher of record for two undergraduate English courses of about 23 students each, in addition to their studies as a Rhetoric and Writing PhD student in the English department.

Like many TAs with a .5 FTE contract, Rae is contracted for 20 hours per week. Yet they often work much more than 20 hours a week.

“The amount of effort that I put into teaching is like way beyond anything that I'm actually being compensated for by the university,” said Rae. “Basically, if you want to actually give your students the education they deserve, then you're going to be working beyond what you're being paid for.”

In addition, Rae would like to see technology improved in classrooms.

“It is incredibly frustrating when you're teaching multimodal composition and you do not have technology that's actually functional, especially when it's in the building that your [program] is housed in,” Rae said. “I don't know if you've ever taught in that basement classroom in the Humanities building, but nothing works in there.”

Even though Rae has earned multiple teaching awards from the English department, they are most proud of the community that they're part of in support of Gaza and the divestment movement.

“I'm proud that we were able to hold our camp for 23 days despite police violence and intimidation,” Rae said. “I'm proud that despite the University's best efforts, we are never giving up this fight for divestment,”

Rae sees a link between the labor movement and the fight for Palestinian liberation.

“I would say that taking a stand for Gaza, is a labor rights issue, because it's a perfect example of how our struggles are all interconnected,” said Rae. “There is no such thing as fair labor practice under apartheid and illegal occupation. In a globalized world, where our labor is interconnected, none of us can gain truly just labor conditions as long as colonial states like Israel and the US continue to illegally occupy stolen land, exploiting resources and our collective labor.”

UGW is Rae's first labor union.

“I was really excited to sign a union card, especially since our Union was brand new when I got here in 2021,” said Rae. “I was really excited to see what it means to actually have something like that in place for worker protections.”

In addition to more just compensation and improved technology in classrooms, Rae would like to see the university provide better teacher training in the areas of disability rights and disability justice.